

## Message Text

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SUBJECT: NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL ON FALL OF VIETNAM,  
SATURDAY, JANUARY 3, 1976

FOR BARBIAN FROM S/PRS

1. FULL TEXT OF LEAD EDITORIAL ENTITLED "A DATE TO REMEMBER  
TEXT FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT:

WHEN HISTORIANS LOOK BACK ON THE EVENTS OF 1975, ONE  
DAY IN PARTICULAR WILL STAND OUT AS A TURNING POINT IN THE  
NATION'S AFFAIRS. ON APRIL 29, PRESIDENT FORD ANNOUNCED  
"THE EVACUATION (OF ALL AMERICANS FROM SOUTH VIETNAM) HAS  
BEEN COMPLETED....THIS ACTION CLOSES A CHAPTER IN THE  
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE. I ASK ALL AMERICANS TO CLOSE RANKS, TO  
AVOID RECRIMINATION ABOUT THE PAST, TO LOOK AHEAD TO THE  
MANY GOALS WE SHARE..."

THE END HAD NOT COME WITHOUT A REVIVAL OF THOSE VERY  
DELUSIONS THAT MARKED THE LONG YEARS OF AMERICA'S TRAGIC  
AND COSTLY INVOLVEMENT IN INDOCHINA'S CIVIL WAR. UNTIL THE  
LAST MOMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM'S COLLAPSE, MR. FORD AND  
SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER HAD ASKED THE AMERICAN PEOPLE  
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TO BELIEVE THAT ONE MORE INFUSION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMS COULD TURN THE TIDE, IT WAS FINALLY UP TO CONGRESS, REPRESENTING THE MOOD AND THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE, TO REJECT SUCH THINKING, ALONG WITH THE DIRE PREDICTIONS OF A UNIVERSAL LOSS OF FAITH IN AMERICA.

AS THE CURTAIN FELL ON SAIGON, THE PRESIDENT GAVE EXPRESSION TO HIS OWN LIBERATION FROM THE MYTHS THAT HAD FOR SO LONG OBSESSED THE NATION'S LEADERS AND PETRIFIED THEIR POLICIES. CHASTENED BY THE FUTILITY OF THE ATTEMPT TO "WIN THE HEARTS AND THE MINDS" OF A REMOTE PEASANT COUNTRY, MR. FORD POINTED TO THE FOLLY OF THE BELIEF THAT "IF WE DO NOT SUCCEED IN EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE, THEN WE HAVE SUCCEEDED IN NOTHING ANYWHERE".

FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, DURING THOSE DAYS OF SOMBER RELIEF, THERE WAS REASON TO FEAR THAT THE LONG MISADVENTURE IN VIETNAM HAD SO ERODED THE AMERICAN PEOPLE'S CONSCIENCE THAT THEY MIGHT TURN THEIR BACKS ON THE TEEMING MASSES OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. IN THE END, THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL COMMITMENT-TO GIVE ASYLUM TO THE HOMELESS-PREVAILED. BEFORE THE YEAR'S END THE LAST OF THE REFUGEES HAD ENTERED AMERICAN COMMUNITIES. EVEN AT A TIME OF ECONOMIC STRESS, THE NATION KEPT THE DOORS OPEN. BY WELCOMING ONE MORE WAVE OF HUMANITY, AMERICANS SHOWED THAT THEY THEMSELVES HAD COME HOME TO THEIR BEST TRADITION.

IN GLOBAL TERMS, APRIL 29, 1975, MARKED NOT THIS COUNTRY'S WITHDRAWAL INTO A NEW ISOLATIONISM BUT A BELATED RECOGNITION THAT AMERICAN POWER, LIKE THAT OF ANY NATION, HAS ITS PROPER LIMITS. ACCEPTANCE OF SUCH LIMITATIONS DOES NOT SUGGEST LESSENED AMERICAN CONCERN WITH INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS; IT MERELY UNDERSCORED THE FOLLY OF TRYING TO IMPROVE THE WORLD BY FORCING IT INTO THE AMERICAN IMAGE. THE EVENTS OF THAT TRAUMATIC SPRING OF 1975 MIGHT BE SUMMED UP BY A WARNING WRITTEN BY HENRY KISSINGER IN 1969, BEFORE HE TOOK CHARGE OF SO MANY OF THE NATION'S FOREIGN VENTURES, THAT WHILE "A NEW INTERNATIONAL ORDER IS INCONCEIVABLE WITHOUT A SIGNIFICANT AMERICAN CONTRIBUTION, " THE COMPLEXITIES OF A UNCLASSIFIED

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CHANGING WORLD MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO "IMPOSE AN AMERICAN DESIGN."

IT IS A WARNING THAT SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO FADE FROM THE NATION'S CONSCIOUSNESS AS NEW AND VEXING CONFLICTS TEMPT AMERICAN POLICYMAKERS TO OVERESTIMATE THE POWER OF THE UNITED STATES WEAPONRY IN SETTING INTERNAL STRIFE IN DISTANT LANDS.

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